



SO MANY RIVERS AND STREAMS

So many rivers and streams wind through Ontario that no one knows just how many there are. Suffice it to say that hundreds of thousands of tributaries — many brimming with all manner of fish — run, trickle and glide across the landscape that stretches from Lake Ontario to the shoreline of Hudson Bay.

In the days when the canoe was the only means of summer transportation in the north, rivers and streams were Ontario's highways and byways — indispensable to the settlement and economic expansion of the province. Explorers, traders, lumberjacks and millers of grist and pulp relied on this network of tributaries for their very existence even as the native Indians fished the waters for their livelihood with spears and rudimentary nets.

Today, as well as being a vital source of water, these same rivers and streams comprise a vast sport fishing opportunity unequalled in variety and abundance in North America. The province covers a huge area — from the springs of the Niagara Escarpment at the same latitude as southern Spain, to mighty marine estuaries flowing into Arctic waters.

SOUTHERN ONTARIO's relatively warm waters nurture a great variety of fish. Streams have steep gradients that create rushing upper reaches — gamely battled in the fall by hardy brook and brown trout striking out for their spawning grounds. There's excellent brook trout fishing from spring to early fall, particularly in the lakes of Algonquin Park, and in rivers flowing into the Great Lakes. Fly-fishermen wade these rivers casting their carefully hand-tied flies.

Spring and fall spawning times have become a major tourist attraction. Rivers such as the Ganaraska, a tributary of Lake Ontario, and the Talbot, which runs into Lake Simcoe, sometimes turn black with fish, a sight that has to be seen to be believed. Rainbow trout rush up river from the Great Lakes in the spring and can be caught — on returning from their spawning grounds — in tributaries leading into southern Georgian Bay and into Lake Ontario, between Toronto and Kingston.



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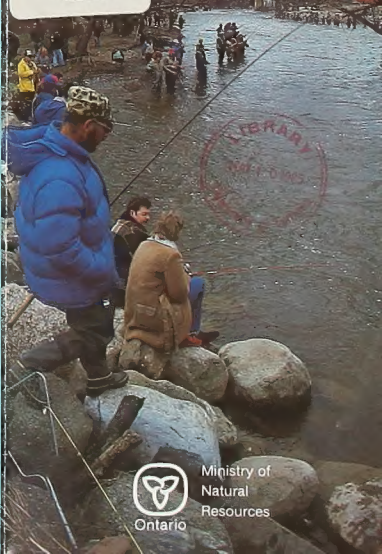
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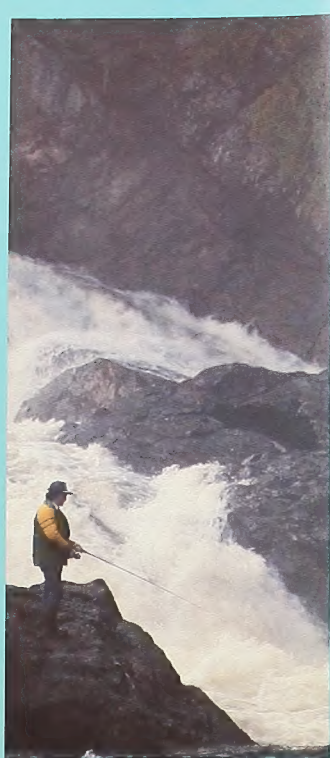
The Rivers and Streams of Ontario

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Introduced in the late 1960's, Pacific salmon (coho and chinook) sweep upstream from mid-September to early November in such tributaries as the Credit River and Bronte Creek, and can be fished year round. These runs echo back to the days of plentiful Atlantic salmon in the eighteenth century, before the species was wiped out at the turn of the century by a combination of dam construction and over-fishing.

Large waterways, such as the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, are rich with muskellunge, walleye and pike. Other large rivers, the Thames and the Grand for example, tend to be slow-moving though they can become violently active in the spring when fed by melting snow. At different times of the year they abound with walleye, bass, pike, carp, suckers, catfish, freshwater drum and gizzard shad.

IN NORTHERN ONTARIO, the rivers and streams that flow across the rugged Canadian Shield tend to be cooler and less rich in food. The water from these long tributaries is usually fit to drink and while the fish are slower to grow than in the south they are just as eager to bite.

The large northern rivers — the Albany, Attawapiskat, Ogoki, Moore and Abitibi, to name a few — are typically turbid, linking lakes as they wind their way across flood plains. Here are found brook trout, walleye, sturgeon, pike and suckers.

Other famous rivers like the Black Sturgeon, the Michipicoten and the Mississagi have resident populations of game fish and in spring and fall offer splendid angling opportunities.

Streams present a series of riffles and pools frequented by brook trout and rainbow trout. Brookies are also to be found in the Hudson Bay estuaries, where Indian fishing camps offering guiding services are scattered along the northernmost shoreline. The Nipigon River on the north shore of Lake Superior is noted for its brook trout. The world record came out of this river in 1916, weighing in at fourteen and a half pounds.

Springtime sees rainbow trout — fish that bite best in spring or fall — spawning in streams running into Lake Superior, Lake Huron and the tributaries flowing into the North Channel of Georgian Bay. During the fall of every other year (odd years only), some tributaries of Lake Superior actually flush crimson as schools of pink salmon struggle upstream.



THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO FISH our rivers and streams. While some anglers take to rowboats, canoes or motorboats (in the larger rivers), others prefer to don a pair of thigh-high waders or to fish with their feet on dry land, from banks and bridges. Still fishing, fly-fishing, casting or trolling — it is all a matter of the angler's choice. Whatever the method, there's a good chance that fish are to be found either resting in deep pools, beneath overhanging banks or close to jutting rocks, large boulders, sunken logs and tree stumps.

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE...

The sheer power of moving water can be awesome and deserves respect. Waders should beware of submerged rocks, sink holes and logs. Whether wading or boating, rapids and waterfalls and tricky currents are always a potential danger and it's best to determine their position in the river before setting out. Boaters must have life jackets or personal flotation devices with them at all times, and avoid horseplay while afloat.

GOOD FISHING NEEDS all the help it can get. That's why the Ministry of Natural Resources is undertaking a comprehensive program of fisheries management.

Eleven fish ladders have been built in the province, opening up hundreds of miles of spawning grounds for rainbow trout while providing a draw for tourists who love to watch the elegant rainbow leap up the fishways' watery steps.

With the help of volunteers, a great deal of work is proceeding in Ontario to rehabilitate damaged and deteriorating fish habitats. River banks are stabilized to prevent erosion, rivers are fenced from cattle and new spawning beds and nursery pools are created.

Conservation officers regularly patrol rivers and streams to make sure angling regulations are followed, and to offer advice to anglers. Fishing seasons protect the various species during their respective spawning periods and most of Ontario's 250 fish sanctuaries have been placed on tributaries large and small. Nevertheless, fishermen can act independently to boost fishing prospects by putting back carefully any fish they don't wish to keep. While there are no restrictions on the size of most fish hooked across most of the province, there are limits on the number of fish that may be caught and kept each day. There are also restrictions concerning the use of live bait (see the Ontario fishing regulations summary for details).



FOR MORE INFORMATION write to the Ministry of Natural Resources, Fisheries Information, First Floor, Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1W3. Or call 1-416-965-7883.

For advice on where to stay and how to get there call the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation toll free: From Canada (except Yukon and N.W.T.)...1-800-268-3735; from New York State...1-800-462-8404; from continental U.S.A. ...1-800-828-8585.

